

Frequently Asked Questions AACAP Advocacy Days 2010

Who will arrange my Capitol Hill meetings? AACAP staff arranges meetings for each Advocacy Days attendee.

Will I need to prepare materials? No, you do not need to prepare any materials. **AACAP will send you personalized “briefing sheets” to begin to prepare you for your visits.** The briefing sheet will include: the specific issues to discuss, information about whether your Representative and Senators were supportive in the past, your meeting location, time, and other attendees. We will also send talking points for you to review and become acquainted with prior to your arrival in Washington. Prior to your visit we will review all of these issues with you and answer any further questions you have. AACAP will also provide you with folders to leave with your Congressional Offices. The folders will include information on all of the issues that you will discuss in your meetings.

What will I talk about? Healthcare Reform is on the top of the Senate and House agenda. You will discuss different aspects of health care reform – workforce, collaboration with primary care, reimbursement. **On Friday morning, AACAP will brief all Advocacy Days attendees on the overall messages of the day.** Remember, you are the expert and have the greatest facts about child and adolescent psychiatry, the Congressional staff and elected officials are interested in hearing from you.

What do I bring? Business cards are encouraged, as it allows Congressional staffers an easy exchange of contact information. You are also welcome to share your program brochures or other information.

What do I wear? While it is important to look professional, there is a lot of walking and standing between Congressional meetings. Be sure to wear comfortable shoes and business casual attire. Try not to have too much metal (keys, pens, pda) and limit the amount of pocket items since there are mandatory metal detectors as you enter each Congressional building.

How will I know where my meetings are? The booklet AACAP provides will have your day’s schedule and a map of where the Congressional offices are located. If you get lost or confused, each building also has police officers who will be happy to help you.

Who will I be meeting with? You will likely be meeting with staff from each office. On Friday, there are no votes taken and many Congressional members leave early to spend the weekend in their home state/district. The staff you will meet with have a primary responsibility to work on healthcare issues. Although you may not meet with your Representative or Senator, that staff person has a good deal of power and it is important that you become their expert on children’s mental health issues.

Who will I attend my meetings with? AACAP arranges meetings by Congressional district, so your meetings will be with those elected officials who represent you. The meeting may just include yourself or it could include other attendees who are also in your district. Every attendee from your state will meet with your Senators’ Offices.

What if I can’t answer a question? Before the meetings, AACAP will provide an orientation on the day’s events. If you are in a Congressional meeting and are asked a question you either can’t answer or don’t feel comfortable answering, simply tell the Congressional office that you, or an AACAP staff member, will get back to them on that issue. This is honest and allows for a follow-up contact with the office.